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AUTHOR Minami, Masahiko
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ABSTRACT

Personal narratives of 20 middle-class Japanese preschoolers, half of them 4 years old and half 5 years old, and their mothers were analyzed using stanza analysis and high point analysis. The patterning in stanzas yielded the following: (1) with regard to the proportion of three-verse stanzas, there were no differences between the groups of 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, and adults (i.e., mothers); that is, the proportion of three-verse stanzas remains unstable across the three groups. (2) However, a smaller proportion of two-verse stanzas and, in contrast, a larger proportion of four- or more verse stanzas produced by 5-year-olds, indicated that they produce slightly longer stanzas than do 4-year-olds. (3) Furthermore, no difference was observed between 5-year-olds and adults in any types of stanzas. It was concluded that compared to 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds have begun to use the form of adult-like narratives. High point analysis indicated the following: (1) compared to adults, young children emphasized a temporal sequence of action with less emphasis on nonsequential information, especially orientation. (2) Although 4-year-olds gave proportionately less evaluation than adults, no differences were observed between 5-year-olds and adults. Therefore, compared to 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds have begun to evaluate in the form of adult-like narratives. The study illuminates the ages at which various narrative components develop and that from early childhood on, Japanese children learn the narrative mode of discourse valued by their mothers. (Author)

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Japanese Preschool Children's Personal Narratives:

A Sociolinguistic Study

Masahiko Minami

Harvard Graduate School of Education

Running Head: JAPANESE PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Author's Address: Harvard Graduate School of Education
Larsen Hall
Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

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Abstract

The development of children's personal narratives reflects both their age and their culture. Personal narratives of 20 middle-class Japanese preschoolers, half of them four years old and half five, and their mothers were analyzed using stanza analysis (Gee, 1991) and high point analysis (Labov, 1972).

The patterning in stanzas yielded the following: (1) With regard to the proportion of three-verse stanzas, there were no differences between the groups of four-year-olds, five-year-olds, and adults (i.e., mothers); that is, the proportion of three-verse stanzas remains stable across the three groups. (2) However, a smaller proportion of two-verse stanzas and, in contrast, a larger proportion of four- or more verse stanzas produced by five-year-olds, indicated that they produce slightly longer stanzas than do four-year-olds. (3) Furthermore, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults in any types of stanzas. We can conclude that compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds have begun to use the form of adult-like narratives.

High point analysis indicated the following: (1) Compared to adults, young children emphasized a temporal sequence of action with less emphasis on nonsequential information, especially orientation. (2) Although four-year-olds gave proportionately less evaluation than adults, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults. Therefore, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds have

begun to evaluate in the form of adult-like narratives. Thus, the study illuminates the ages at which various narrative components develop. It also illustrates that from early childhood on, Japanese children learn the narrative mode of discourse valued by their mothers.

Japanese Preschool Children's Personal Narratives:**A Sociolinguistic Study**

The development of children's personal narratives reflects both their age and their culture. Children begin to talk about the past at about two years of age (Eisenberg, 1985; Sachs, 1979, 1982), but these early productions are brief through the age of three and a half years. Three-year-olds' narratives are often simple two-event narratives, while four-year-olds' narratives are much more diverse; five-year-olds tell lengthy, well-sequenced stories that end a little prematurely at the climax (Peterson & McCabe, 1983).

It is critical to consider cultural differences in how children structure their personal oral narratives. For example, African-American children tell a narrative consisting of a series of implicitly associated personal anecdotes (Michaels, 1981, 1991). Hawaiian children present "talk story," rambling personal narratives enhanced with humor, jokes, and teasing in the form of joint performance, or cooperative production of responses by two or more speakers (Au, 1993). Likewise, Japanese elementary-school children tend to tell concise stories that are cohesive collections of several personal experiences (Minami & McCabe, 1991, in press-a). This succinct narrative style exhibited by Japanese children shows a remarkable contrast to European-American children's narrative style, which is often a lengthy story that details a single experience and often revolves around the solution of some problem (Minami & McCabe, 1991).

In the present paper, personal narratives produced by Japanese preschool children and adults are examined in an attempt to answer the following key questions:

1. How do Japanese four- and five-year-olds turn their experiences into narrative? What developmental stages do they exhibit?
2. How do Japanese adults (i.e., mothers) turn their experiences into narrative? Are there any similarities and/or differences between adults' narrative style and children's narrative style?

Methods

Subjects

Twenty middle-class Japanese preschool¹ children participated in this study, along with their mothers; they were interviewed separately in their native language by an adult native speaker of Japanese. The children consisted of the following two age groups:

- (1) 10 five-year-old middle-class Japanese children who were in five-year-old children's classrooms in preschool at the time of data collection (5 boys and 5 girls, $M = 5;3$ years).
- (2) 10 four-year-old middle-class Japanese children who were in four-year-old children's classrooms in preschool at the time of data collection (5 boys and 5 girls, $M = 4;3$ years).

Procedures

The interviewer asked the children to talk about their past experiences, in the manner developed by Peterson and

McCabe (1983). This elicitation technique had previously been used with Japanese children (Minami, 1990; Minami & McCabe, 1990, 1991, in press-a) and proved to be effective. For example, following a short prompt about an injury the interviewer had suffered, the children were asked questions about personally experienced events, such as "Have you ever gotten hurt?" "Did you ever get a shot?" or "Did you get stung by a bee?" Children responded with personal narratives and were then asked follow-up questions that encouraged them to talk about one specific experience at length.

To examine the relative narrative competence of young children, an attempt was made to elicit personal narratives from adults (i.e., mothers). Only a small number of researchers (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994; Scott, 1988) have had adults perform the same task as children. Having accurate information on adults' narratives, however, is important in order to examine what narrative components preschoolers have yet to apply to their narrative tellings, compared to adult narrators. Adults' narratives are therefore assumed to serve as a standard of comparison that provides the culturally appropriate, full-fledged, rhetorically well-formed narrative that children are eventually expected to accomplish in telling personal narratives.

Following Labov's (Labov, 1972; Peterson & McCabe, 1983) definition of narrative, in this study a narrative was defined as two or more than two utterances that recount a

specific past event. The longest narrative produced by each subject was selected for analysis. This decision came from Peterson and McCabe's (1983) claim that since length is correlated with complexity, choosing the longest narrative produced by each child is appropriate for measuring his or her current level of narrative development.

Coding

From the diverse array of methods for analyzing narrative structure (see McCabe & Peterson, 1991, and Peterson & McCabe, 1983, for review), two different coding schemes were chosen to examine the structure and content of personal narratives. One is verse/stanza analysis (Gee, 1985; Hymes, 1981), which has been applied successfully to narratives from various cultures, and the other is high point analysis, based on the Labovian approach (Labov, 1972; Peterson & McCabe, 1983).

Structure. The personal narratives were first coded into lines, verses, and stanzas based on coding schemes originally developed by Hymes (1981, 1982, 1985, 1990) and later extended by Gee (1985, 1986, 1989, 1991a, 1991b). In the present study, the most subordinate unit of the narrative is defined as lines, which correspond to what Chafe (1993) has termed "accent units." Lines are thematically grouped into verses (basically defined as single clauses), which, following Chafe's (1993) classification, are "intonation units." Verses are in turn grouped into stanzas, which are thematically constant units, and thus have a unitary

perspective in terms of time, location, character, and a rather narrow topic or theme. In adopting verse/stanza analysis for Japanese narratives, specific coding rules were formulated (Minami, 1990; Minami & McCabe, 1991): (1) when the Japanese particle ne (you know) appears, it always signals the break between two lines; and (2) when ne comes at the end of one semantically complete statement (which almost always corresponds to a clause), it also tends to signal the break between two verses.

Content. The second coding scheme focused on the content of each clause (which generally corresponds to a verse) in personal narrative from the standpoint of high point analysis. Labov and his colleagues (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) presented linguistic techniques to evaluate the narration of experiences within Black English vernacular. Minami and McCabe (1991, 1993, in press-b) have drawn from an adaptation of Labov's analysis called high point analysis (Peterson & McCabe, 1983) because of the central importance of ascertaining the emotional climax--high point--of the narrative. The high point analysis coding scheme clarifies the role that each clause (or verse) plays in organizing a narrative. Some clauses play the role of descriptive "orientation," which is considered to set the stage for the narrated events, whereas others are considered to function as "evaluation" or present "actions." Clauses (or verses)

produced by each participant were fit into one of the following five categories:

1. Action: Specific actions, events, or processes that take place are categorized as "action" (e.g., "chuusha shita.": "[I] got a shot." [Tomo, boy, age 5;6]). According to Labov's (1972) original definition, a narrative includes at least two sequentially ordered events; thus, actions are the only obligatory component of the narrative. Because action clauses recapitulate a single event that took place at some discrete or restricted point in time, they are categorized as "restricted" narrative clauses (Labov, 1972; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). In other words, because "restricted" narrative clauses are temporally ordered, a change in their order will result in a change in the interpretation of the original semantic interpretation.
2. Orientation: Statements in which the narrator digresses from the events of a narrative so that he or she provides the listener with contextual embedding of the narrative, such as the setting, people, time, features of environment, conditions, and ongoing behavior in the narrative. Orientation clauses are not confined by any temporal juncture, and can therefore range freely through the narrative sequence. They are therefore categorized as free narrative clauses (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) (e.g., "tulip gumi no toki.": "When [I] was in tulip class." [Ayaka, girl, age 5;3]).

3. Evaluation: Another type of free narrative clauses is the evaluation clause, which provides the listener with emotional information about the narrative, such as what to think about a person (e.g., "oyogeta kara": "Um, because [he] could swim." [Yumi, girl, age 4;4], place, thing, event, or more globally, the entire experience described (e.g., "nakanakatta": "[I] didn't cry." [Minori, girl, age 5;8]). Evaluation clauses, therefore, inform the listener about why the narrator wanted to tell the narrative.

4. Appendages: This is a composite category including narrative comments that appear either at the beginning (abstracts, e.g., "kaze no toki mo itta koto aru": "Even when (I had) cold, (I) went." [Minori, girl, age 5;8], attention-getting devices, e.g., "boku shitteru wa": "I know [something]." [Ryota, boy, age 3;8]) or at the end of the main body of the narrative (codas, e.g., "oshimai": "That's it." [Akio, boy, age 5;4]).

5. Reported speech: Statements that report character speech by generally reproducing the speech performed. Reported speech is included because it is considered linguistically marked recounting of a past speech event (Ely & McCabe, 1993) (e.g., "ano ne, 'chuusya shinai hito ehon yonde mattoite kudasai, tte sensei itteta": "Well, you know, 'Those who haven't gotten a shot, please read books while waiting,' said the teacher." [Kimi, girl, age 4;6]).

Note that the distinction between restricted narrative clauses and free narrative clauses corresponds to Hopper and

Thompson's (1980) distinction between foreground information (i.e., plot-advancing events/main line event clauses) and background information (i.e., plot-motivating comments/contextualizing clauses), respectively. Also, as can be seen above, appendages do not appear by themselves; thus, ignoring subcategories (i.e., abstracts, attention-getting devices, and codas) may result in gross simplification. For example, a narrative clause, "chotto dake chi ga deta" ("[I] bled a little bit" [Kayo, girl, 4;1]), describes specific action that took place. At the same time, however, since the clause is accompanied by an evaluative tone, it is categorized as "action with evaluation" Thus, orientation, evaluation, and action clauses are also sometimes subordinate to other categories.

Synthesis of the Two Types of Analysis

Emphasis on foreground (sequential) information. When a synthesis of verse/stanza analysis and high point analysis was applied to the narrative of Akio, a boy aged 5;4, the following organization was identified. The basic-level category of verse/stanza analysis is stanza, whereas the subordinate-level categories are verse and line; the numbers to the right refer to the lines (the minimum unit) produced, and small letters (a-j) in parentheses indicate the beginning of each verse. Verse/stanza analysis, therefore, displays a hierarchical structure, reflective of the experiences described in a narrative. High-point analysis coding is also provided; verses that fall into the categories of action,

orientation, evaluation, appendage, and coda are indicated as ACT, ORT, EVL, APP, and COD, respectively. Note that each verse is not necessarily homogeneous in terms of high-point analysis categories; rather, mixed categories are prevalent.

Example 1 Akio's personal narrative, age 5;4

(Note: INV = investigator)

Stanza A

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|-------------------------------------|---|
| (a) | ACT:ORT | <u>ano ne,</u> | 1 |
| | | 'Um, you know,' | |
| | | (INV: <u>un</u>) | |
| | | 'uh huh' | |
| | | <u>speed dashiteitara ne,</u> | 2 |
| | | '(I) was speeding, you know,' | |
| | | (INV: <u>un</u>) | |
| | | 'uh huh' | |
| (b) | ACT | <u>kokete,</u> | 3 |
| | | '(I) fell,' | |
| (c) | ACT | <u>handle magatte ne.</u> | 4 |
| | | 'handlebars became bent, you know.' | |

Stanza B

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--|---|
| (d) | ACT | <u>odeko no byooiin itte ne,</u> | 5 |
| | | '(I) went to the forehead hospital, ² you | |
| | | know,' | |
| (e) | ACT | <u>ano ne,</u> | 6 |
| | | 'um, you know,' | |

(INV: un sorede)

'yeah, then'

byooiin itte ne,

7

'(I) went to the hospital, you know,'

(f) ACT

sorede ne,

8

'then, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

koko maite moratte ne,

9

'(I) had this (part) bandaged, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

odeko.

10

'the forehead.'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

Stanza C

(g) ACT

sorede ne,

11

'then, you know ,'

ojiichan to obaachan ga ne,

12

'my grandpa and grandma, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

arare o motte kite,

13

'brought rice cake cubes,'

(h) ACT

tabe te,

14

'(I) ate (those cakes),'

- ### Stanza D

- 15

Stanza C introduces new characters (i.e., Akio's grandparents); therefore, in this sense, the stanza is more complicated than the previous two stanzas. However, the omitted subject in the subsequent verse (h) is the narrator himself. Furthermore, although verse (i), "sorede ne, daibu naotte kita" ("then, you know, [ø] became very much okay"), serves an evaluative function, the events described in verses (g) and (h) and verse (i) represent a chronological sequence. Therefore, Akio closely followed the temporal sequence of the events in Stanza C, too.

In Stanza D Akio departed from the three-verse pattern stanza and concluded the story with a coda ("owari": "that's it"). To present his injury experience in this narrative, however, Akio mostly used three chronological verses in a time sequence. In other words, while he chained events sequentially and structured his narrative causally, he did not necessarily elaborate on background information such as emotional states.

Emphasis on background information. In contrast to children's personal narratives, in which descriptions of events are temporally sequenced and, moreover, causally connected, adults' narratives include many "free narrative clauses" that primarily focus on "background" information.

Example 2

A Japanese adult's personal narrative

Stanza A

(a) ORT

nanka, anoo, chichi oya to,

1

'Well, with my father,'

17

- (h) ACT suwari naoshita shunkan ni, 12
 'the moment (I) changed my sitting position,'
- (i) ACT makikondan desu ne, 13
 '(I) was caught, you know,'
 ashi o. 14
 'by the leg.'
- (j) ACT:EVL sorede chi ga sugoi de te. 15
 'And blood gushed out.'
- Stanza D
- (k) ORT sono nichiyooobi dattan de, 16
 'Um, it was Sunday.'
- (l) ACT de, ano byooiin o mawatte, 17
 'And, well, (we) went around (to find) a
 hospital.'
- (m) ORT:EVL yatto, chotto tooku dattan desu kedo, 18
 'Finally, (the hospital we found) was a bit
 distant, though.'
- (n) ACT ikkasyo ittemo, 19
 'Although we went to one place,'
- (o) ORT soko wa kyoo, anoo, rentogen ga torenai, 20
 'in that place that day (I) couldn't have an x
 ray (examination),'
- (p) ORT sensei ga inai to yuu koto de, 21
 '(they) said that the doctor was absent (on
 that day),'
- (q) ACT:EVL soshite tooku made hakobarete. 22
 'And (I) was taken to (that) distant (one).'

Stanza E

- (r) ORT:EVL de, koo Achilles ken ga mieta jootai datta
kara, 23
 'And the condition was that the Achilles'
 tendon was exposed (where my ankle was cut).'
 (s) ACT:EVL de, maa nutte morattan desu kedo. 24
 'And (I) had (the wound) closed with stitches,
 though.'

Stanza F

- (t) EVL sono toki ni sono chichioya wa moo hahaoya ni
sugoi okoraretan desu kedo, 25
 'At that time, well, my father was heavily
 scolded by my mother, though.'
 (u) EVL sono jibun to shite wa sonoo ne oneechan no
sore o, 26
 'Well, as far as I was concerned, well, you
 know, my older sister's (cushion),'
gucha gucha ni shite wa, 27
 'if (I) made the cushion get out of shape,'
ike na i naa, 28
 '(I) would feel sorry,'
omotte. 29
 '(that was what I) was afraid of.'
 (v) EVL yatta koto ga, 30
 '(but) what (I) did,'
motto taihen na koto ni nattan de, 31
 'brought a serious consequence.'

32

2

20

appendages, orientation, action, evaluation, reported speech, psychological complements) of the children's coding; for the subcategories (e.g., abstracts, attention-getting devices, coda) it was 0.89. Likewise, Cohen's kappa was 0.95 for the main categories of the adults' coding, and 0.79 for the subcategories. To describe the relative strength of agreement associated with kappa statistics, if the range is between 0.61 and 0.80, it is labeled "substantial"; further, if the range of kappa is over 0.81, it is considered to represent "almost perfect" agreement (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986; Landis & Koch, 1977). Therefore, except for one, which is still in the "substantial" agreement range, all estimates of reliability fall into the range of "almost perfect" agreement.

Results

Verse/Stanza Analysis

Structural patterns were examined using verse/stanza analysis. As can be seen in Figure 1, of the total 41 stanzas produced by the four-year-olds, two-verse and three-verse stanzas amount to 36.6 percent (15) and 29.3 percent (12), respectively. On the other hand, only 14.6 percent (6) of stanzas were longer than three verses. For individual four-year-olds, the average number of verses per stanza ranged from 1.8 to 4.5, and the number of stanzas produced ranged from 2 to 7.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

Similarly, as shown in Figure 2, of the total 36 stanzas produced by the five-year-olds, 25.0 percent (9) and 33.3 percent (12) were two-verse and three-verse stanzas, respectively. Unlike four-year-olds, however, over 30.6 percent (11) of the stanzas consisted of more than three verses. For individual five-year-olds, the average number of verses per stanza ranged from 2.0 to 4.5, and the number of stanzas produced ranged from 2 to 7.

Insert Figure 2 about here.

A similar tendency was observed among the mothers. As Figure 3 illustrates, of the total 202 stanzas produced by the 20 mothers, two-verse and three-verse stanzas amount to 21.3 percent (43) and 28.2 percent (57), respectively; thus, almost half were two- or three-verse stanzas. At the same time, however, 42.6 percent (86) of the stanzas also consisted of more than three verses. The average number of verses per stanza produced by the mothers varied widely from 2.44 to 4.75; they also varied greatly in the production of the number of stanzas from 2 to 17. These figures illustrate that while some mothers produced lengthy oral narratives, others were reticent.

Insert Figure 3 about here.

Table 1 gives the means and standard deviations of verse/stanza-related variables. Statistical analyses of the patterning in stanzas yielded the following: (1) With regard to the proportion of three-verse stanzas, there were no differences between the groups of four-year-olds, five-year-olds, and adults (i.e., mothers); that is, the proportion of three-verse stanzas remains stable across the three groups. (2) However, a smaller proportion of two-verse stanzas, $t(18) = -1.81$, $p = .09$, and, in contrast, a larger proportion of four- or more verse stanzas, $t(18) = 1.69$, $p = .10$, by five-year-olds, indicated that their narrative production is slightly longer than that of four-year-olds. (3) Furthermore, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults in any types of stanzas, although adults produced significantly larger proportions of four- or more verse stanzas than four-year-olds, $t(28) = -3.64$, $p < .01$. Therefore, we may conclude that compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds have begun to use the form of adult-like narratives.

Insert Table 1 about here.

High Point Analysis

High point analysis indicated the following: (1) Compared to adults, young children emphasized a temporal sequence of action with less emphasis on nonsequential information, especially orientation.⁵ (2) Although four-year-olds gave proportionately less evaluation than adults, $t(28) = -2.08$, $p < .05$, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults. As far as evaluation is concerned, therefore, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds' personal narrative organization seems to move in the direction of adult models (for means and standard deviations, see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here.

Discussion

The patterning in stanzas has proved to be not only an excellent tool to present how Japanese turn their experiences into narrative, but also an excellent indicator to show what kinds of developmental changes take place among Japanese children aged four and five. With regard to the proportion of three-verse stanzas, there were no differences found between the two different age groups and the maternal group; although the proportion of four- or more verse stanzas is much more common than three-verse stanzas for adults, three-verse stanzas seem to be stable in terms of proportion. On

the other hand, a smaller proportion of two-verse stanzas and, in contrast, a larger proportion of four- or more verse stanzas by five-year-olds, girls in particular, indicate that their stanzas are slightly longer than those of four-year-olds. Furthermore, although adults produce more four- or more verse stanzas, no statistically significant differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults in any types of stanzas. We can therefore conclude that compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds have begun to produce adult-like narratives.

High point analysis has also proved to be an excellent indicator to show not only what kinds of similarities and/or differences exist between adults' narrative style and children's narrative style but also what kinds of developmental changes take place. The analysis has revealed that, compared to adults, among children's narratives the proportion of action clauses (i.e., "restricted" narrative clauses or foreground information) is high, while the proportion of "free" narrative clauses (i.e., background information) is relatively low. When telling a personal narrative, in addition to providing less information about the characters, the setting, or the event, preschool children seem to pay less verbal attention to their own attitudes toward the event. In other words, compared to adults, young children emphasized a temporal sequence of action with less emphasis on nonsequential information, especially orientation. Although four-year-olds gave proportionately

less evaluation than adults, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults. Therefore, while both four- and five-year-olds emphasize simple description of successive events, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds have begun to evaluate at adult-like levels. The present study has revealed age-related differences between four-year-olds and five-year-olds, and more specifically, the transitional nature of five-year-olds; that is, five-year-olds try to express the meaning of the experiences that they had.

This result seems reasonable when considering what kinds of components are added and expanded in the process of narrative development. As Hopper (1979) defines, foreground information refers to the parts of the narrative that relate a sequence of events with respect to a timeline thus belonging to the skeletal structure of the narrative, and, in contrast, background information refers to supportive narrative (e.g., orientation, which presents static descriptions of the scene, and evaluation, which describes the agent's motives) that does not itself narrate the main events. Thus, there seems to exist a relationship between an individual's age and the amount of background information he or she adds to the narrative. Moreover, as seen in the increase of evaluation clauses with age, the older an individual becomes, the more nonsequential information he or she adds to the narrative, in order to emphasize why he or she wants to tell the narrative. The results obtained in the

present study, in fact, confirm previous studies of narrative development (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994), which found "young children would focus mainly on description of events and activities, whereas older narrators would provide more background information relating to the attendant circumstances in which the unfolding plotline events are embedded" (p. 45).

To conclude, the present paper has illustrated (1) in what areas young Japanese children's narrative development takes place, and (2) similarities and differences between adult narrative productions and children's early narrative productions. This study demonstrates that with age, children change and develop in their capacity to provide nonsequential information, in order to produce full-fledged, rhetorically well-formed narratives, as most adult narrators do. Also, preschool children seem to have understood what the canonical narrative form is like, and they gradually try to tell narratives in culture-specific ways. Thus, the study illuminates the ages at which various narrative components develop; preschool years clearly represent the period of extremely rapid development in the child's acquisition of narrative capacity. It also illustrates that from early childhood on, Japanese children learn the narrative style valued by mothers.

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Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Verse/Stanza Related
Variables in Personal Narrative Production

Variable	Four-year-olds (<u>n</u> = 10)		Five-year-olds (<u>n</u> = 10)		Mothers (<u>n</u> = 20)	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Average number of verses per stanza	2.65	.82	3.08	.73	3.49	.63
Number of stanzas	4.10	1.66	3.60	1.43	10.10	4.00
Percentage of one-verse stanzas	13.95	19.34	9.76	13.38	7.37	9.04
Percentage of two-verse stanzas	43.50	27.40	22.86	23.33	24.01	15.24
Percentage of three-verse stanzas	26.12	17.13	34.52	23.26	25.44	15.91
Percentage of four-or more verse stanzas	16.43	20.80	32.86	22.62	43.18	18.04

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Variables Related to High
Point Analysis (Proportion)

Variable	Four-year-olds ($\bar{n}$ = 10)		Five-year-olds ($\bar{n}$ = 10)		Mothers ($\bar{n}$ = 20)	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Action	55.00	19.65	47.64	23.22	18.47	13.27
Orientation	26.87	20.03	23.67	10.90	38.87	14.18
Evaluation	33.39	22.08	41.24	25.25	46.73	13.15
Appendages	7.01	9.46	4.03	5.56	6.05	4.93
Reported speech	2.64	6.15	2.76	5.83	2.93	4.87

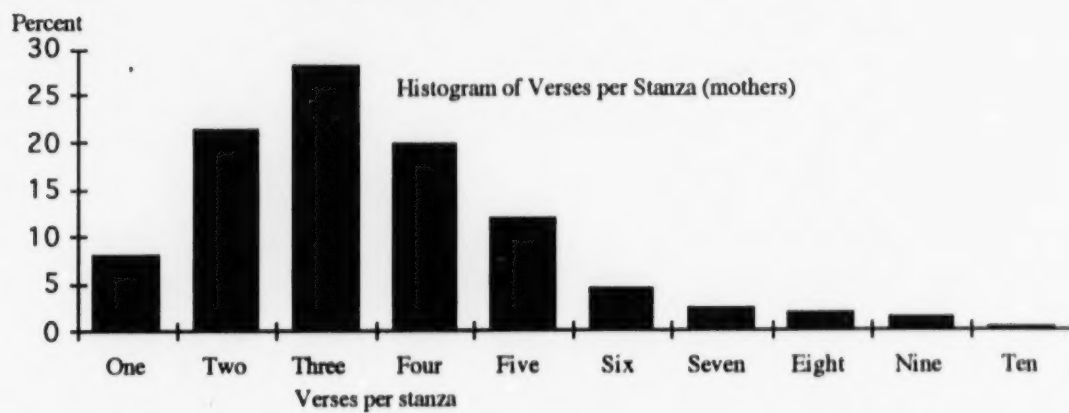
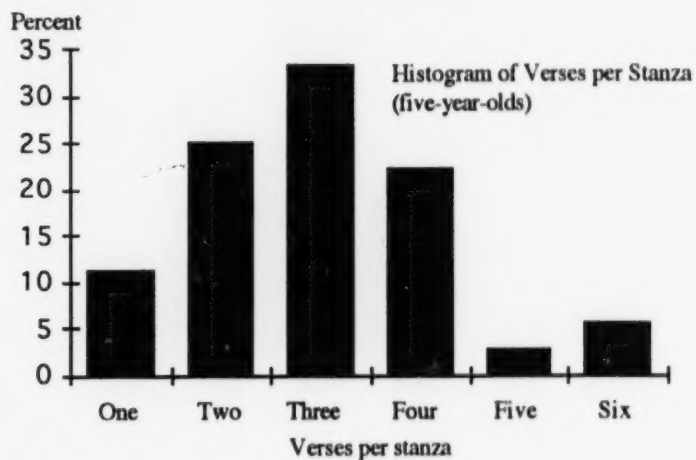
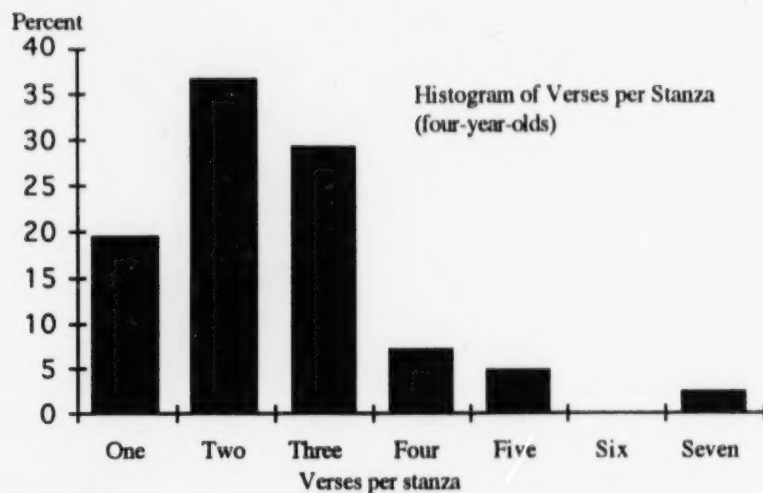
Note: As far as three major elements--action, orientation, and evaluation--are concerned, irrespective of the level of categorization (first level or second), whenever one of these variables appear, it is counted as one appearance. Therefore, because many comments are counted twice here, the proportions do not add up to 100%.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Histogram of verses per stanza (four-year-olds).

Figure 2. Histogram of verses per stanza (five-year-olds).

Figure 3. Histogram of verses per stanza (mothers).



Footnotes

1. Note that preschool (yoochien, often translated as "kindergarten") in Japan generally begins at age three or four and continues until age six, when children enter elementary school. In Japan, virtually all four-year-olds attend preschool.
2. This is a direct translation of the boy's way of describing the hospital (because his forehead was hurt by his fall from a bicycle, and he was treated at a hospital).
3. According to Hopper's (1979) distinction between foregrounding (i.e., main-line events or restricted narrative clauses) and backgrounding (i.e., commentary or free narrative clauses), the verbal aspect of foreground clauses tends to be perfective (e.g., completive or punctual), whereas that of background clauses tends to be imperfective (e.g., progressive). In the present study, however, a clause that includes the imperfective aspect is considered to represent a hybrid of foregrounding and backgrounding information.
4. In Japanese, constituents that are placed after the main verb are typically described as "afterthoughts." The narrator adds on more specific information to the clause at the end, having belatedly realized that the listener will

need more specific information to understand what the narrator has described (Clancy, 1985). This syntactic strategy can also be considered some type of right dislocation, that is, the narrator moves an NP from its position within a clause and leaves a pronoun copy of the NP in that position (Akmajian & Heny, 1980), koko (this) in this case (line 9).

5. The proportion of children's "restricted narrative clauses" (or "foregrounding information") was substantially higher than that of adults'. That is, four-year-olds provided proportionately more action statements than adults, $t(28) = 6.04$, $p < .0001$; likewise, five-year-olds provided proportionately more action statements than adults, $t(12) = 3.68$, $p < .01$. In complementary fashion, the proportion of the sum of evaluation and orientation clauses provided by adults was substantially higher than that of either one of the children's groups. That is, adults provided proportionately more "free narrative clauses" (or "background information") than four-year-olds, $t(11) = 2.37$, $p < .05$. Also, adults gave proportionately more "free narrative clauses" than five-year-olds, $t(28) = 2.73$, $p < .05$. The two components of "free narrative clauses" were then examined separately, because, according to Labov and Waletzky (1967), while orientation serves the referential function, evaluation fulfills the affective or evaluative function. Although

marginal, difference was observed between four-year-olds and adults in the proportion of orientation statements, $t(28) = -1.90$, $p = .07$; likewise, five-year-olds provided proportionately fewer orientation statements than adults, $t(28) = -2.97$, $p < .01$.